



Press Release

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

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Social Security Inspector General Report: *Conversion of the Social Security Administration's Legacy File Management System*

The Social Security Administration (SSA) Inspector General issued a report on May 13, 2010 that found SSA had effectively implemented a portion of the first phase of a conversion project to replace its legacy file management system, Master Data Access Method (MADAM); however, the implementation strategy was not efficient because the strategy may result in less than optimal database design and other issues.

MADAM was developed in the early 1980s to support the storage and retrieval of SSA's major program Master Files. SSA needed to replace MADAM because of the increased difficulties in maintaining the system. Should MADAM not operate properly, it would be difficult for SSA to process the vast amount of data needed to fulfill its mission. SSA started the conversion in 2005. The conversion project consists of three sequential phases. The Phase I conversion, in total, is expected to take 8 years to complete. SSA has successfully implemented a portion of Phase I. However, SSA did not perform sufficient analysis to determine the full scope and total resources needed for the conversion project. Further, SSA lacked critical decision making information for the current conversion strategy.

The Inspector General's report found that SSA could improve some of its project strategic planning practices to ensure efficient and effective Information Technology (IT) investment and resources allocation decision making. Specifically, (1) SSA had not classified the MADAM project as a major IT investment; (2) SSA lacked a long-term, comprehensive strategic plan for the conversion; (3) the conversion methodology resulted in a less than optimal design; (4) SSA did not consider other alternatives for replacing MADAM; and (5) SSA needed to improve certain project management practices.

The Inspector General's report recommended SSA discuss with OMB the need to classify the Project as a major IT investment and take additional steps to address the issues identified in the report. In response, SSA agreed to discuss with OMB the need to classify the Project as a major IT investment, perform an alternatives analysis for its future IT projects, and comply with project management requirements. However, with regard to our recommendation for SSA to develop a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan for this project, SSA believed the extended duration of

the project makes a plan as proposed infeasible. With regard to considering alternatives for MADAM, SSA stated it had considered alternate conversion plans by considering the advantage and disadvantages for the application rewrite efforts, thus did not agree to assess the conversion strategy because it would delay its application rewrite efforts.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADOBEPDF/A-14-09-19097.pdf>, or for additional information, contact Jonathan Lasher, Assistant Inspector General for External Relations, at (410) 965-7178.